L: Hombertie E-4,6 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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from its ill effects after the evil has been exorcised, must also know the forces they are combating if they are to achieve any measure of success. By the same token, practitioners of black magic must know what steps may be taken to counteract their *wanga* so that, if necessary, they can in turn call forth supernatural emissaries to strengthen the evil impulses originally set in motion. In this sense, therefore, the *houngan*, the *gangan*, the *bocor*, and the *caplata* employ essentially the same techniques and operate with the same forces, the difference between them being one of degree rather than of kind. "*Houngan, c'est magasin. Gaingé un pile marchandise* — The *houngan* is like a shop. He has a lot of merchandise," says the Haitian, quoting a well-known proverb as he makes the point.

In the main, it can be said that though the *houngan* and the *gangan* practice magic, their main preoccupation is with the *loa* — the maladies they send to afflict a man and his possessions — while the *bocor* is concerned almost exclusively with setting in motion the agents that actuate black magic, and the *caplata* dabbles in anything that is wanted. One important means whereby the sorcerer obtains his powers is the evil *loa*, but there is this essential difference between them: the gods of the *houngan* are family gods who come to him through the natural course of inheritance, endowing him with the commissance that gives him his control over the supernatural world, while the *bocor* buys his gods. And when a god is bought, it is always acquired so as to enhance the position of its owner at all costs, despite the knowledge that the power thus purchased is dearly bought, bringing its own eventual punishment. Sometimes an ambitious *houngan* adds to his familial *loa* other "purchased" gods, but this is resented by the deities who have given him his powers, so that in time these benevolent powers take all means to humble and crush him. Furthermore, gods acquired in this way pass on to unwilling members of their owner's family and, after a generation or two of mischief-making, must be "restrained" or "banished." A number of

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magic and for the Congo, Ibo, and Nago *loa*; the *mazon*, as an interlude dance between possessions; and steps of the *angaw*, or salute to the gods. There is also the Martinique cycle of secular dances, including the *zaute*, *calibaine*, and *bamba*; the rara dances found only at Easter time; and the social Congo dances. Finally European dancing, called *bal*, is performed to the sound of a drum, a phonograph record, or a small orchestra. With a qualified exception of the last, the type of dancing in all these is African. The essence of style in these dances lies in the manipulation of feet and the muscles of the body, particularly those of shoulders, hips, and buttocks, the patterns of which have been carried over in their entirety from the aboriginal homeland. For men and women to dance with arms about each other, as do Europeans, is still regarded in Mirebalais as immoral.

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The trait of African culture that has survived most tenaciously in all the New World, even where European influence has been strongest, is that of folk-literature — of tales, proverbs, and riddles.[7] Though these have flourished in Haiti as elsewhere, prolonged story-telling sessions, so characteristic of other Negro groups, were not encountered in Mirebalais. It is likely that this is principally a seasonal phenomenon, and the failure to find long evenings of story-telling during the summer months, when the rains are at their height and work in the fields is hardest, may properly be an expression of this seasonal variation. As elsewhere in Negro societies, tales and riddles are told at wakes, though their enjoyment by children and their function as a part of the education of the child are as important as in Africa itself. The familiar types of African animal stories and the tales of human tricksters and magicians are well known, and well told. The figure who corresponds to Br'er Rabbit, or to the spider Anansi, is the little 'Ti Malice, while the foil for his pranks is the great awkward Bouki.[8]

One folkloristic element that gives Haitian life a strong African flavor is the proverb, which, as elsewhere in Negro

3: Herskovits E-4,8 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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cultures, is used not only to point morals for the young but as an expression of the characteristically oblique forms of Negro expression in a quarrel, or in sounding a warning, or in commenting acidly on some social situation. A famous proverb, quoted from the earliest days, is today heard often in Mirebalais: "*Zafai' mouton pas zafai' cabrit*—The affairs of the sheep are not the affairs of the goat"—an injunction against gossip. When a person boasts that no one can harm him, the reply may come: "It is on a narrow path that one has to deal with a difficult horse." Should a man dismiss an experience as of but little consequence to him, he may hear the comment: "Often one pays an ox for a goat." When one person does harm to another, his victim may warn him with the phrase: "Behind the mountains are other mountains." If a man whose fortunes are flourishing attempts to console another who has suffered misfortune, or a rich man jibes at a poor one, the retort may be: "The rock under the water doesn't know how the rock in the sun suffers." To such an extent do proverbs comment on all aspects of life that almost no extended conversation occurs without them. Some of these are of European origin, but both numerically and in their use their character is preponderantly African, as is shown by their specific correspondence to proverbs used today in the regions from which the Negroes of Haiti were derived.[9]

In the practice of magic, and more especially of black magic, it has been noted that African and European traditions have combined into an integrated cultural unit. The outward expression of magic in the charm or "fetish" as an aspect of African life is so obvious that it has been commented on by all observers. In Haiti, though the charms are not prominently displayed and personal charms especially are worn beneath the clothing, this concept of their importance in coping with life has been retained. Yet, as has been seen, Haitian magic is not African alone. For while the forces behind protective magic are primarily the *loa*, and those behind black magic are

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3 Mirebalais

overturn his memory, overturn his thought, overturn his house, overturn for me my enemies visible and invisible; cause the thunder and the tempest to break them into pieces. And in honor of St. Bouleversé, three Paters and three Ave Marias. . . .[8]

Thus it is seen how Catholicism invades the beliefs and rites of the *vodun* cult. In an analogous fashion *vodun* has not failed to make itself felt in certain festivals of the Church,[9] for while elements of *vodun*, rigidly suppressed inside the Catholic churches, are absent except in so far as they can be carried on surreptitiously, they are nevertheless integral parts of these fêtes in the minds of the folk who make pilgrimages to them. So arresting is the resulting mingling of practices, and so significant for the amalgamation of cultures that has taken place in Haiti, that a detailed discussion will be given of the most prominent instance of this type, the festival in honor of the Virgin of the Palms, which takes place each year on July fifteenth at Ville-Bonheur, or, as it is better known, at Saut d'Eau. The festival of 1926 has been described by Price-Mars;[10] here certain observations made during the fête of 1934 may be given, especially as they have to do with those aspects of the mythology which validate the festival, and as they illustrate the non-Catholic, voduistic phases of the celebration, of importance for the points being considered in this chapter.

Beside the church, Ville-Bonheur has three especially sacred spots, St. John, En bas Palmes, and Saut d'Eau — the falls themselves. At St. John is a large *campêche* tree surrounded by many palms, from beneath which flow streams of water. St. John is said to have appeared here, carrying his scepter as in the chromolithographs, and at that time water began to flow in the sacred springs, and except for one short period has continued ever since as holy water, being used for drinking and bathing, but never for purposes of cooking. The priests

L: Herskovits E-4, 8 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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to the Haitian *loko* found in the New World are the *bakru* of Dutch Guiana, who in turn derive from the "little folk" of West African belief, beings that are always important in making magic. See Herskovits, M. and F. (IV), 103–7.

[10] Dorsainvil (I), 150, mentions this rite.

[11] Notably by Seabrook, 92 ff., who made great capital of the concept and purported actually to have seen these beings! Parsons (II), ii, 592. Tale 77, I, reproduces a Haitian's account in Créole of how a Sorcerer goes about ensnaring a victim to make of him a zombi.

[12] Parsons (I), 178–9.

CHAPTER XIII

[1] Price-Mars (II), 96 ff., gives a detailed description of the peasant house. The beehive-shaped hut mentioned by Craige, 56, is not found in Mirebalais, though the valley is but a short distance from Hinche, of which he was writing. Seabrook, 18, also describes the interior of a peasant house.

[2] Charlevoix, ii, 42.

[3] St. John, 159.

[4] Seabrook, 104 ff., devotes some space to a discussion of *pénitence*, but so changes its meaning to the Haitians that it is quite useless in making a serious comparison of data.

[5] See the discussion in Dorsainvil (I), 150, concerning other retentions of African motor behavior in Haiti.

[6] Craige, Seabrook, and Wirkus, all give lively accounts of cock-fights.

[7] Cf. Price-Mars (I), 1–15, for accounts of the manner in which stories are told in Haiti. It is to be noted that the African belief that a tale must not be told during the daytime persists there.

[8] A large collection of Haitian folk-tales has been published recently by Parsons (II), ii, 470–596.

[9] Audain has published what is perhaps the largest collection of Créole proverbs; his work, however, is unfortunately out of print.

CHAPTER XIV

[1] Dorsainvil (I), 158.

[2] Exceptions to this statement must be made in the case of the careful study of the relationship between Catholicism and *vodun* by Price-

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[For the themes of various Haitian songs, see categories 535 and 539.]

2: Courlander 6-5 (1937-1943) 1960 893 1668 893

In the Artibonite Valley, where much rice is grown, a similar ceremony takes place before the rice is gathered from the fields. In this ceremony it is rice that is shared with the family ancestors, who have first rights, and with close friends who have aided with the planting. This feast is called *manje diri*, or sometimes *goute diri*, the tasting of the rice. Small amounts of rice are taken from the fields, cooked with red beans or Congo beans, or perhaps made into dumplings. The farmer's friends and relatives gather while the food is still cooking, and play games such as *awari* and *trois-sept*. The children play *gage* games and sing songs, and sometimes a *maît' conte*—a storyteller—comes to entertain them.

When the food is finally ready, the family ancestors are given their share. The farmer takes a calabash bowl of the rice and walks around the house grounds calling upon his immediate ancestors to accept their share. He drops a little food on the ground for the remembered dead, for the unknown dead who preceded them, for the Haitian dead, and for the dead of Africa. He also drops small portions for the dead twins, the dead albinos, the deformed dead, and the dead who have lost limbs, and for the distressed dead who have been improperly buried, or who may not have received the feasts that were due them. Afterward, he offers food to those who died of drowning, or who were lost at sea and never heard of again.

Each course is shared with the ancestors. The farmer takes a pitcher of water, spilling a little here and a little there until the dead have quenched their thirst. He also gives a little of everything to the family loa. Then the calabashes are set out on a bench or table reserved for the dead, and this food is not disturbed. Food for the marassas is set out separately on the ground in three small *canis*, or gourd dishes.

The family ancestors whose good will has made the harvest possible having been taken care of, the food is now shared among the extended family and the friends who helped in the fields. Later there are prayers to the loa, the saints, and God, led by the houngan or a prêt' savane. To finish the affair, there may be Juba-type dances for the older people, while the children watch or play *gage* games.

Only after this service are the farmer and his family and his *coumbite* (mutual labor group), if he belongs to one, free to go out and harvest the rice.[1]

These feasts of the rice and yam harvests are not of New World origin. Similar harvest festivals for yams or rice are held over a wide area of West Africa. There, as in Haiti, the fundamental concern is with the family ancestors, whose good will must be constantly nourished so that the rains continue to fall, the crops flourish, and human beings remain fertile. Among the Ashanti of Ghana, for example, the yam and rice harvests are

[1] Account given by Jean Ravel Pintro. Cf. P. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

never seen again, and after a prêt' savane had read prayers over the spring the people again dr[ew] water from it.

Baka more often change[s] themselves into gray or red pigs, but one ingenious baka was said to have transformed himself into a bicycle, which was seen traveling almost at night on the road from Port-au-Prince to Léogane.

Some people wear cha[rms] against the baka's malevolence; but the most effective weapon is the coucoumacque stick. The coucoumacque, or monkery palm, is a palm tree that grows only a few feet high. It has magical powers to drive [off] not only baka but other evil beings as well. When the tree is growing in its natural state, it is said, you must never mention its name in its presence. Should you say within its hearing, for example, "Look at the coucoumacque," it will wilt and fall over, losing all its vital powers. The trunk of this midget palm is a favorite material for fashioning a walking stick or a short baton. A man going on a long journey into strange country may carry a coucoumacque stick with him to brandish at the crowds, to drive off strange animals that may be baka, and to ward off baka in disguise.

In their relationships with human beings, the baka are not always random. Sometimes, for a terrible price, they will undertake to make a man rich or to "eat" his enemies for him.

In some parts of Haiti, baka seemingly have found their way into the ranks of the lwa. In the Congo-Guinée pantheon there is a deity called Bakulu Baka, or Bakoka. He is a malevolent spirit who "eats" people in the best baka tradition, and he lives, significantly, in the mapou tree, which is shunned by all good lwa.

The *zagagneurats*, or *zagagneurs*, usually made with another race, is a manlike being but [with] djab are small, some large. They are supernatural [beings] human beings. A frustrated [man] for a favor, which will [be granted] Persons who appear to [have] entered into an *zagagneurat*

One story is about a man [who] of money, went to a fam[ous] Fourbon. This powerful [djab] but only on condition [that] his children. The man [agreed] the anniversary of his co[ntract] arrived, he did not go to Trou Fourbon

with one of his children as he had agreed. That night his oldest child died. The next year to the day, his second child died. And the third year, the third child died. On the fourth anniversary, the man's wife died. On the fifth, he himself died. The *djab* of Trou Fourbon had collected his debt.

Another great *djab* lives on the northern mountain called Morne Rondo. A man of Cap Haitien was said to have made a compact with him for wealth. One day there was a great hubbub in front of the man's house. A crowd gathered and stood peering inside his door. What they saw was a rain of money falling down from the rafters. The floor was covered with ten-gourde bills. When the *gendarmerie* came to investigate, they stood at the doorway in awe, watching the money float to the floor. The man finally closed the door. That night he moved away, and no one in Cap Haitien ever saw him again.

The *djab* are insatiable. For their favors—which range from providing wealth and political position to destroying one's enemies—they always demand more in return than the recipient has granted us. Catholic ritual is called upon in some instances to break the *djab*'s chain of demands.

Some tales are told in which human beings outwit the *djab*, particularly the lesser ones; but more often than not, the *djab* have the last laugh. During the big hurricane which hit Haiti in 1954, a huge landslide occurred near the place called Bayè Roche in the La Selle Mountains. An entire village was wiped out, covered by the falling rocks. Throughout this region the disaster was attributed to the action of a *djab* reputed to live in one of the nearby caves. Many lost cattle were found wandering near Bayè Roche, and they were believed to be people whom the malevolent *djab* had transformed into animals.

The height of bravado is to demand to be confronted with a big *djab* face to face. There is a song which goes:

> Candoit'm allé oh!
> Candoit'm allé djab nan Trou Fourbant
> Candoit'm allé! [Ex. 51]
>
> Take me, oh!
> Take me to the *djab* in Trou Fourbant
> Take me!

There are still other supernatural creatures in Haitian lore who must be guarded against, such as the *djablesse*, the *revenant*, and the *loup-garou*. The *djablesse* is a female ghost who must live in the woods for a number of years before she can enter heaven, as a punishment for the crime of

The connection between the Haitian zombie and certain soulless beings of West Africa is quite apparent. Herskovits has observed that in Dahomey there are tales of persons thought to be dead who were found wandering in far-off places. These individuals had no memories of their former lives. "They were soulless beings, whose death was not real, but resulted from the machinations of sorcerers who made them appear as dead, and then, when buried, removed them from their graves and sold them into servitude in some far-away land."[1]

According to stories told by some Haitians, in ceremonies for the dead where there is suspicion that the deceased was the victim of this particular kind of poisoning a close relative stabs the body with a knife before burial to assure that it will not become a zombie. In other instances, close guard is kept over the grave for a number of days and nights, so that the body cannot be stolen.

Some members of the elite publicly dismiss the whole business as savage fantasy but privately say something like: "I don't believe in this sort of thing, but how can you explain the case of Marie Zamhom in Cap Haitien?" And then they will tell of curious events of which they have firsthand knowledge.

There are numerous legends of persons who died and were buried, only to reappear perhaps years later in some mountain village, or in the big city of Port-au-Prince. An educated man in Port-au-Prince declared that a dead cousin of his reappeared one day in the city ten years after her burial. He tried to speak with her, but she answered only haltingly and gave no sign of recognition. After this one appearance, he said, she was never seen again. Another Haitian from the north told of a graveyard watch in his village to prevent disinterment of the grave of a young girl who had just died. The two watchers dozed fitfully, and suddenly awoke to see a man removing the girl's body. When they jumped to their feet and went after him he escaped into the shadows. But the girl staggered about, fell to the ground, and gave birth to a baby. Both the girl and her newborn child were taken to the village and given salt to eat. Both of them recovered.

One villager from the southern mountains reported that in his travels he came upon a coffee plantation on the sparsely populated mountain called Morne la Selle, and found all the laborers to be zombies. They did not sing as they worked, their movements were slow and cumbersome, and they did not sweat in the hot sun. When he asked for a drink of water, no one replied. While he stood trying to converse, the master of the plantation came with a hard leather whip and angrily ordered him to leave.

[1] [Herskovits, Dahomey, II, p 243. Cf p 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

rhythmically, to the accompaniment of drums, cutas, or horns, while a singing leader composes topical songs in which the laborers join.

The tools which a rural Haitian chooses, and the way he uses them, often are in a West African tradition. He performs a multitude of tasks with his machete, or bush knife: weeding a garden, peeling an orange, cutting down a tree, making a drum or mortar, opening a cocoanut. It is an all-purpose tool, as it is in Africa. Until a few years ago it was supplemented by the cutes-bang, heavier, "double machete." The axe and the chisel are known and used too, but the machete is supreme. The hoe is the tool for tilling the soil, even in the flat country, and even though the Haitian has horses and cattle which could pull a plow. Horses are for riding and not for pulling. In carrying loads, the Haitian peasant still prefers the head to the shoulders. If he has a donkey, the donkey will carry for him. An old Haitian proverb goes: "Merçi Bondieu pas' bourique: li, si nous pas gainyain bourique li faut Haitien pa'l vant bagaille" (Thank God for the donkey, if we didn't have the donkey the Haitian would have to carry everything)." Generally speaking, the rough and rocky terrain of Haiti and inadequate secondary roads have done nothing to encourage the use of carts or wagons.

Corn is stored in the trees, as in West Africa, or in granaries built upon stilts, also as in West Africa. The Haitian makes his fire in the African fashion, with several long sticks or poles meeting point-to-point in the heart of the fire. As the ends are consumed, the sticks are pushed toward the center. Grain is pulverized in large wooden mortars, as in West Africa, and winnowed in a woven tray. Fish traps are sometimes woven in the traditional West African manner, and fishermen often set their nets in converging spirals and beat the water with sticks to drive the fish to the center. And on the rivers and lakes are to be seen dugout canoes of a kind familiar on the inland waters of West Africa.

The folklore of the fields contains many themes known to the West African. One old Haitian farmer, discussing the spiritual relationship of the planter to the earth, declared that a man must be strong and potent when he plants, else the crops will be vitiated and sickly. For this reason, he said, a man must not plant seeds the day after he has had sexual intercourse, because he has been temporarily drained of his life-giving powers.[9]

The tale of the hoe that worked by itself in the fields is also widespread. It enters many animal and Bouki stories, and also is known in a form that is familiar in West Africa. In this story, there was once a man who owned a hoe which worked by itself whenever a magical formula was pronounced. It would stop working whenever the magical

9 [For footnote, see Category 116, P 352.-- Ed.]

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counterorder was given. The owner of the hoe was happy and prosperous until one day a thief (in one version, the trickster Anansi) stole the hoe and put it to work in his own fields. But the thief knew only the words to command the hoe to begin, not the words to stop it. He could not stop the hoe from working, and it worked its way out of the valley until it came to the country of the white people.[2] The whites knew the words to stop the hoe, and so they gained control of it. It is said by some that the whites fashioned the hoe into a plow.

[2] [For footnote, see Category 86, p 352.--Ed/pr]

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13. Comments on the Mighty: Political Songs

The African-style song of social criticism has found no worthier subjects than the historic political figures of Haiti. There is no doubt that the African slaves used this art form to express their feelings toward the white masters as they had used it to comment upon the behavior of their own chiefs and fellow tribesmen. The worthy leaders were praised in song; the unworthy were castigated and their sins, failures, and social misdemeanors publicized in folk songs. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, slavery had come to an end in Haiti. The deep democratic sense of human dignity had outlasted the colonial masters and emerged tempered and sharp. The songs of criticism became not only comments upon political figures but campaign propaganda as well. They dwelt upon the accomplishments or faults of the candidates for political office. Friendly songs sought out every virtue, and invented others, in the man or woman being praised. Unfriendly songs looked out and lacerated or poked biting fun at the subject, not even sparing his physical deformities.

Yet the political songs are more than statements of merit or fault. Cumulatively they are a kind of folk history of Haiti. No political aspirant ever went unsung by his peasant army, or unridiculed by his opponent's followers. The songs the people sang about their heroes and their enemies recall events and details that formal history has forgotten or ignored. The memory of the folk song is powerful and long. Some of the recollections go back more than a century.

History books tell us that in December, 1843, Major Charles Hérard aîné Rivière was elected to the office of the presidency, and that a new constitution was drawn up by the Constituent Assembly. The new constitution was an accomplishment of the liberal and democratic forces of the nation. It guaranteed certain civil rights to the people. It provided that judges be elected instead of appointed, abolished life terms for

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14. Songs of Bravado and Boasting

Among the secular songs are many which have boasting, bravado, or challenges as their central theme. Usually this kind of song is playful in tone, though sometimes there may be a serious or even an ominous undercurrent. Often the challenges are directed toward, or concern, djabs and *dèmons*. Just as often they involve persons of great prestige and power, perhaps the president himself. These songs say, in effect, "What's afraid of the bo-gans?"—or of the president, or of the demon of such-and-such a mountain, as the case may be. Sometimes the bravado motif is implicit, but as often as not the singer challenges the world to take him before some feared personage, human or supernatural, and see what will happen.

In one such song, the singer boasts that he is ready to be conducted before a fearful and malevolent deity named Jean Zombie. As though to assure the listeners that he is in his right mind, the challenger emphasizes that he has not been drinking anything intoxicating and is perfectly sober:

Rwul Jean Zombie ah vini wè moin, conduit'm ale!
Rwul Jean Zombie ah vini wè moin, conduit'm ale!
M'pas bwè tafia pwi' moin fait timoin!
Dèmon bonsoir moin conduit'm ale!
Jean Zombie ah wie wa conduit'm ale!
M'pas bwè tafia pwi' moin fait timoin! [Ex. 105]

Rwul Jean Zombie, ah, comes to see me, take me to him!
Rwul Jean Zombie, ah, comes to see me, take me to him!
I haven't drunk tafia, I am not drunk!
I am at my hounfor, take me to him!
Jean Zombie, ah wie we, take me to him!
I haven't drunk tafia, I am not drunk!

Another song challenges the community to take the singer to face the president—right into the president's parlor. The fact that the president

16. Folk Tales: Bouki, Malice, and Jean Saute

In the folk tales and legends of Haiti there has been a powerful assimilation from many cultures. There are stories of European and African derivation, and countless others that are to be found in one form or another in the Middle East, Asia, and throughout the Americas. The precise origins of many of these stories probably will never be known. Some of them are as ancient as the Panchatantra and have variants in India, Indonesia, Korea, Egypt, West Africa, and northern Europe. It is likely that many tales with this broad distribution came into Haiti by way of Europe, along with the French, Spanish, and English settlers. But numerous stories told in Europe are well known in West and Central Africa too. The folk tales of the world have an astonishing universality. The adventures of the West African hare and spider are closely paralleled in the tales of the American Negro Br'er Rabbit, the hare of Thailand, and the mouse deer of Indonesia.

In Haiti today, as in other islands of the West Indies, there is an endless repertoire of folk stories of many kinds—animal tales; trickster tales; stories about magicians, kings, and princesses; *contes fables*; and stories that account for the beginnings of things, the behavior of certain animals, and their physical appearance. There are European dragons and devils, and beasts of the African forests. Some of the stories are long and episodic, some are so brief—even curt—that they have lost their original core. They may point out moral or ethical values or, more commonly, strike completely amoral levels in which the humor depends upon acts that in real life would be regarded as cruel. Like the folk songs, the tales are often used to express the democratic equality of the small person with the great. In many instances it is the small man who triumphs over the powerful and rich. In the Bouki-Malice cycle it is usually the little wily trickster who wins over the larger and physically stronger opponents.

None of the Haitian tales are meant to be read, for storytelling is a

dramatic art. The narrator interprets his characters as he goes along, providing different voices, singing, giving humorous or tragic emphasis, and changing his facial expressions to convey the temper and mood of the protagonists. He imitates the movements and actions of the animals. In print, his broad gestures and sly intimations are all lost. The Haitian tale is a vehicle for the actor, who plays his theme according to circumstances and the responsiveness of his audience. The storyteller, like the musician, is likely to be found almost anywhere. But there are storytellers of special renown, known as *maît' conte*—who may be called upon to entertain young people at a party or Nine Night gathering. They have seemingly endless repertoires and can go on indefinitely telling tales about Bouki and Malice, or Jean Sotte and Jean L'Esprit. In former times, the *maît' conte* used an instrument such as the *howa* to interpersw his narration with music. Old people recall that rough rillbers and other instruments of African design were once employed for this purpose.

Anansi, the spider trickster-hero and buffoon of West Africa, has survived in Haiti as well as elsewhere in the Antilles. In Jamaica and other British islands, Anansi has become Brother Anansi, Sister Nancy, or just plain Nancy. Although he usually figures in tales dealing with other animals, he has more and more come to assume a human form, as he has in Haitian tales. But in Haiti the name Anansi is only rarely heard. Anansi's cleverness and stupidity are now attributed to two characters named Ti Malice and Nonc' Bouki, both of whom are regarded as human beings.

In West Africa the spider hero directed his mischief against the great and strong creatures of the forest, now one, now another. In Haiti, Ti Malice, who has inherited Anansi's wit and guile, pits himself mainly against Bouki, who has inherited Anansi's stubborn nature and his pompous stupidities. Ti Malice (whose first name probably comes from the Spanish *tio*, uncle) has become the slick sharpy of the city, the clever and predatory "operator," the practical joker. Like his spider prototype, Ti Malice has humour as well as cunning, though he is often remorseless. Bouki is full of self-confidence but is slow-witted and an easy prey for Ti Malice. He is thought of as a clumsy peasant of the mountains. He has a constant desire to pit himself against Ti Malice, and a capacity for involving himself in utterly fantastic situations which appeal to the Haitian sense of the ridiculous.

In many respects this team of comedians resembles another pair known in South and Central America—Tio Conejo (Uncle Rabbit) and Tio Coyote; both are pranksters, but the rabbit usually manages to outwit the coyote. Ti Malice and Bouki also figure in the universal tar-baby story, and in many other tales known in the United States in which Br'er Rabbit

and Br'er Fox are the protagonists. Many of these tales, like the characters themselves, have West African prototypes, though others seem to have been created out of the workaday substance of Haitian life. They are not, however, essentially children's tales. Some of them involve risqué or ribald escapades.

Among the Haitian tales are numerous themes which stem directly from African lore, such as the hoe that worked by itself in the fields; the single grain of seed corn which, when thrown across the ground, grew an entire field of maize; and the pot that boiled without fire. There are many remnants also of the African tale in which a "tail feather" of an elephant is required for some magic purpose. There is a pursuit which follows the acquisition of the elephant hairs, and the pursued person saves himself with three magical eggs. When he throws one on the ground, a huge river springs up behind him. When he throws down another, a forest appears behind him, and so on.] The elephant's tail feather is regarded as a very powerful protective charm in many regions of West Africa. That the memory of it should continue in Haiti so precisely, although there are no elephants, is striking.

Although Haitian folk tales are abundant and are well loved, over the years they have tended to become more and more simple. The episodic European tales of kings and princesses and monsters that have been taken over are, generally, of a naïve kind without moral or intellectual significance. They are interesting for the twists and turns of fate and for momentary laughs.

The tale of Grandmother's Bath is a case in point. In this story, Jean Sauté (Stupid John) is left at home to care for Grandmother while Jean L'Esprit (Smart John) goes to market. Jean Sauté puts Grandmother in a tub and pours boiling water over her, killing her instantly. He looks at the grimaces on her face and concludes that she is enjoying it immensely; so he sticks her pipe in her mouth and pours more water over her. When Jean L'Esprit returns, Jean Sauté is very proud of himself. But Jean L'Esprit discovers that Grandmother is dead. The brothers then pack their belongings to go to the city. There follows a series of strange and bizarre adventures. Jean L'Esprit sends his dull-witted brother back for something he has forgotten; Jean Sauté misunderstands and brings the door off the house. Throughout their adventures Jean Sauté carries the door with him. When they get to the forest they climb into a tree to sleep for the night, Jean Sauté carrying his door along. While they are there, a convocation of devils (*djab*) takes place under the tree. Jean Sauté has to urinate, and he does so into the middle of the convocation. The devils shout gleefully that it is wine from heaven and try to catch the water. Eventually the door

[Footnote appear on P. 353, Category 116. --Analyst]

falls from the tree and frightens them away. The two brothers continue on their way and come to a country where it is always night—a great dragon with seven heads has swallowed the sun.* The two brothers kill the dragon, with the help of Jean Sauté's stupidity. They cut into the monster and find a silver box, which they open, releasing the sun from captivity. The news goes on ahead. When they arrive at the city, the king, in appreciation, offers them the choice of his daughters. Jean L'Esprit, as might be expected, chooses the youngest and most beautiful. Jean Sauté turns them all down and asks to marry the king's cook.

This story seems to be one of the most extended tales in Haitian lore, unless one groups all the Bouki-Malice stories together in a single cycle. However, most European-style tales (Beauty and the Beast and Jack and the Beanstalk, for instance) have suffered considerable deterioration. In the process of adaptation, such tales lost much of the original detail and decorative motif that made them interesting to the European. They became stark and brief, fragmentary anecdotes about kings, devils, and snakes.

With some few exceptions, the African stories have undergone less change: the Singing Tortoise (found later in this chapter) and Anansi's Tug of War, for example. But even in the tales of African origin there has been simplification to the extent that many of them are mere fragments; in some even the central point itself has been lost. The Bouki-Malice tales, counterparts of the Anansi stories of West Africa, have lost the contemplative tone found in the African originals. Moral points of the kind commonly made in African tales have almost entirely disappeared and are to be found only in proverbs. If the good wins over the bad, that is simply an accident of fate; for the bad wins over the good just as frequently. Death and sadism are constant themes. But the prime conflict remains the smart against the stupid, and the small and weak against the large and powerful.

Like kindred tales elsewhere in the West Indies and in the United States, many of the stories have standard beginnings and endings. The storyteller begins by saying "Cric," and his audience replies, "Crac." When he comes to the end he usually uses a variant of:

"I was there and saw it. And Malice gave me a kick and sent me all the way here to tell you about it." Or: "So I have run all the way here to tell it to you." Or: "That's the story, and if you don't believe me, tafia will never kill you." Or: "They gave me a blow, and I have just come to my senses." Or again: "So he kicked me over the house and here I am." These formula endings often provide a dramatic punch for the children who are listening.

*[Footnote appears on p. 353, category 11L – Analyst]

relations between the husband and the wife's family, it is nevertheless commonplace for men who can afford it to have more than one wife.

[3] Simpson, in "Sexual and Familial Institutions in Northern Haiti," *American Anthropologist*, October-December, 1941, p. 656, observes that in northern Haiti there are three distinct types of plaçage. "A *fanmi-vaille* shares her man's house, while a *maman pitite* is a woman who has borne children for a man without living in his house. A *fanmi plaçée* does not live in her consort's house, and she has given him no children." Although these [4] three women have no legal rights of inheritance, Simpson notes, "sexual choice in a man's property stand in descending order for these three classes of plaçées."

[5] Johnston, *The Negro in the New World*.

[6] HERSKOVITS, *The Haiti Value Project*, p. 18.

[7] Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," *Journal of Negro History*, October, 1940, p. 515.

[8] "The group work patterns of Haiti show a common ancestry with Negro gang work patterns in the United States. While nothing so formalized as the *coumbite* persists among American Negroes, similarities are striking. The emphasis on rhythm, the swinging of implements or picks in unison, the need for a singing leader, the responsive chorus, and the competent use of some kind of percussion to keep time, all derive from a common concept of the nature of group work.

[9] Herskovits, "Some Aspects of Dahomean Ethnology," *Africa*, Vol. V (July, 1932), 266. *Also cited.*

[10] Cardinall, *Tales Told in Togoland* (p. 109), observes that among the Ewudo people of Togoland "no man may have sexual intercourse with a woman for seven days before he goes hunting."

[11] In Ashanti every wife is known to *Nyame Akumi Pofi Tufuo* enables the lodgekeeper with securing the original law; according to this version, the law escaped across the sea to the country of the white men, who then possessed the secret. Afterward, the white men brought many laws to Ashanti.

CHAPTER III: *Dancing and Dance Drama (pp. 126-158)*

[1] Quoted in Courlander, *Haiti Singing*, p. 73.

[2] Actually a banjo-like instrument of African provenience. The similarity of the word *banza* to *banjo* appears to be more than a coincidence.

[3] Saint-Méry, *De la danse*, as translated by Lillian Moore in "Moreau de Saint-Méry and Dance," *Dance Index*, October, 1946, p. 238.

[4] *Moore, op. cit.*, p. 238.

[5] "Brandy or rum with gunpowder in sometimes drunk by persons possessed by the lwa Ogoun, deity of war.

[6] *Moore, op. cit.*, p. 238.

[7] United Nations photograph no. family.

[8] Students of United States Negro life will recognize the word *crowdjolly* as a variant of *coonjine*, a dance known on the lower Mississippi. According to one observer, Dr. Willis James of Spelman College, Atlanta, small Negro boys on the docks used to call to the boat passengers:

> "Throw me a nickel
> Throw me a dime
> If you want to see me
> Do the coonjine."

The term *coonjine* is still used to mean hand-loading of cotton bales on river boats. When this loading was done mainly by hand some years ago, the stevedores worked rhythmically in a line and sang. An old man from Louisiana testified that within his own memory the dockside *coonjine* was accompanied by makeshift drums and other percussion.

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Chapter 12: *Songs of Complaint, Recrimination, and Gossip* (pp. 137-148)

[1] See Herskovits and Herskovits, *Suriname Folk Lore*, pp. 137-51.

Chapter 13: *Comments on the Mighty: Political Songs* (pp. 148-161)

[1] Edgar, Hoki, *Her History and Her Characters*.

Chapter 15: *Secret-Society Songs* (pp. 168-183)

[1] Herskovits, *Dahomey*, I, p. 298.
[2] See Courlander, "Modern Meaning in Ganakouma," *Journal of Negro History*, XXIX (1944), 46 ff.

Chapter 16: *Folk Tales: Beaski, Malice, and Jom Sonie* (pp. 170-184)

[1] "The theme of throwing magic objects upon the ground to ward off a pursuer is widely known, but the story as told in Africa has special characteristics of its own, such as the elephant hair. In Ashanti tales, the prize is the tail of the queen elephant, which is needed to serve as a rattle.

[2] "This part of the tale, at least, dealing with the dragon that swallowed the sun, seems to be known in western Europe. Some reports of the tale of Grandmother's Hair have come from France.

[3] Variants of "The Problem Where We Have of Answer" are widely known around the world. The story is told among the Bemah of East Africa, with the legendary character Abanawura, a Persian wisdom hero, playing the title role. Anansi plays the same part in West Africa, and other wisdom heroes are identified with the same adventures in India and Southeast Asia. The tale has been reported also from the West Indian island of St. Martin ("He Meets the King's Candidates," in Parsons, *Folk-Lore of the Antilles, French and English*, Part II).

[4] "The fishing story surrounds here, except for the chase, is found in many versions in West Africa. The second part of the tale, the pursuit, has a special Haitian flavor. Beaski chasing Malice through the cane field's visual grapnels and the church, with Malice trying to make appropriate use of the situations, is a special delight to Haitians. The dialogue between Beaski and Malice's behind is also regarded as very humorous.

[5] "Known in virtually all Negro communities in the Americas, the tale of eating the heavy (or hunter, pork, or lard) seems to have come to the New World by way of Africa, although it is also known in Europe.

[6] "The theme of the singing tortoise (or other animal, or an object such as a shell) has appeared in folk tales ranging from West Africa through the Americas to the Far East. This Haitian variant bears a striking resemblance to a tortoise story from the Gold Coast (Ghana). In the Gold Coast variant the tortoise asks the hunter who finds him to keep his singing ability a secret, but the hunter has to tell about his discovery. When the village headman hears about it, he calls for a test. The tortoise refuses to sing, and the hunter is punished. Then the tortoise sings his song, which emphasizes the hunter's bad faith. The philosophical tone of the Haitian tortoise's songs, particularly the last one, is quite similar. The last line of the song is from a Haitian proverb.

Chapter 17: *Children's World: Game Songs and Games* (pp. 185-188)

[1] The description of this game is from Paul, "Les jeux à gage," *Bulletin du Bureau d'Ethnologie*, July, 1945, p. 51.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1963) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Chapter 18: *Musical Instruments* (*pp. 189–202*)

[1] Herskovits and Herskovits, *Suriname Folk-Lore*, p. 87. The stick is also known in Surinam.
[2] *Informant:* Joseph Longo, Beauzeville.
[3] *Library of Congress album, Folk Music of Venezuela.*
[4] Pamphlet accompanying recordings, *Music of Equatorial Africa* (New York: Ethnic Folkways Library, 1950).
[5] See Courlander, "Musical Instruments of Cuba," *Musical Quarterly*, April, 1942, pp. 233–234.
[6] Combaire Sylvain, *Les Contes haïtiens*, pp. 97–98.
[7] Curt Sachs, *Geist und Werden der Musikinstrumente* (Berlin, 1929), pp. 60–61.
[8] Schweinfurth, *The Heart of Africa*, I, 287.
[9] *Informant:* Sébéhas Toré, Bamako.
[10] See Courlander, *op. cit.*, p. 230.

Appendix 1: *The Pantheons* (*pp. 335–349*)

[1] Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 245 ff.
[2] See Ellis, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa*, pp. 47–48; and Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 245 ff.
[3] Ellis, *op. cit.*, p. 32.
[4] Herskovits, *op. cit.*, pp. 152 ff.
[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 101 ff.
[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 201 ff.
[7] Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa*, p. 67.
[8] Herskovits, *op. cit.*, pp. 105 ff.
[9] Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples*, pp. 45, 67 ff.
[10] *Library of Congress Recording No. 101.*
[11] Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples*, p. 47; W. R. Bascom, in Introduction to record album *Drums of the Yoruba of Nigeria* (New York: Ethnic Folkways Library, 1950).
[12] Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples*, pp. 58 ff.
[13] Ellis, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples*, pp. 71–74; Herskovits, *op. cit.*, I, 55.
[14] Herskovits, *Life In a Haitian Valley*, p. 267.
[15] *Ibid.*, p. 280.
[16] Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 108–109.
[17] Ellis, *The Tshi-speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa*, p. 68.
[18] Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples*, pp. 79–80.
[19] Herskovits, *Dahomey*, I, 163 ff. Ellis, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples*, p. 83, says that this deity was especially important in the town of Aglomé.
[20] Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples*, pp. 45, 76.
[21] Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 104.
[22] Ellis, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples*, pp. 71–74.
[23] Saint-Méry, *De la danse*, p. 45.
[24] Cuvier, *Africa Dances*, p. 188.
[25] Red eyes as a symbol of malevolence appear in the folklore of many Negro cultures. Our own American ballad about the gambler Stackalee states:

> "The judge says, 'Stackalee, I would spare your life,
> But I know you're a bad man, I can see it in your red eyes.'"

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remains is the verbal handing down of recollections, one of the most natural things in the world and one congenial to Haitian peasants. Every region, every village, has its accomplished storytellers. The phenomenal resemblances in detail of the coumbite to Dahomean coöperative work may be due therefore to this verbal tradition.

Once the men have cleared and prepared the field, the care of the crop devolves upon the women. For this there has been a long background of tradition. In African agricultural regions, in the plantations of Saint-Domingue during slave days, under the forced labor régimes of Toussaint and his successors, women had been field workers. They had never known anything else. We have seen that many of the present-day practices of Haiti go back to the times of Pétion and Boyer: during this period women did field work, not by decree of government but by force of circumstance. Their men were constantly taken away from the farms for service in the large army; if crops were to be raised, women must do the work. Sometimes soldiers were stationed near their own homes, and could help in production; but they could be called on to march, at short notice and in peacetime, anywhere in the country. Many of the later presidents made it a definite policy frequently to change the station of regiments, so as to prevent revolutionary projects and guard against the soldiers' being tampered with by the disaffected in any single community.

Sir Harry Johnston records his observations on the Haiti of 1910 as follows:

> The women are the best part of the nation. They are splendid, unremitting toilers. In the face of all discouragements with which a bad Government clouds their existence the women of Haiti remind one of certain patient types of ant or termite, who, as fast as you destroy their labour of months or days, hasten to repair it with unslackening energy. The market-women that descend from the country farms to the Haitian towns know that on their way to the market-place, and in that market-place, they will be robbed by soldiers and officers until the margin of profit on the sale of their wares has practically disappeared. Yet they continue to toil, to raise poultry and cattle, till the fields, see to their gardens, make pottery and mats. They cannot stop to reason, but must go on working from three years old to the end of their lives. Such industry (which is almost equally supplemented by that of the peasant husbands) protected should make Haiti one of the richest countries in the world for its size and population; but so long

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[p. 290]

XVII

OUTER ASPECTS OF HAITI

[538] HAITIAN poets rarely sing the beauty of their native land, nor do the travelers who roam the earth dwell long upon this particular pearl of the Antilles. Mountains slope down into the sea, sunlight sparkles upon the foaming waves as they roll in, peninsulas and bays lend variety to the coast line: yet the majestic display does not make the visitor cherish Haiti in his mind and heart alongside Sicily or Scotland or Maine or Japan. Columbus in 1492 thought the island "enchanting," saying that "it is a wonder. Its mountains and plains, and meadows and fields, are so beautiful and rich for planting and sowing, and rearing cattle of all kinds, and for building towns and villages" that it "surpasses anything that would be believed by one who had not seen it."[1] The Spanish admiral viewed his discoveries with the eye of faith, seeing the glories which might come to be; his enthusiasm was matched by other early Spaniards. The French in the eighteenth century likewise thought the land beautiful, and with skillful management made their human habitations an ornament to generous nature.

If one could view Haiti only from the sea or from the air, he would probably, like the Spaniards and Frenchmen, speak in rhapsodies, for the land still stands up out of the sea—"the highest peak of that submerged mountain range whose summits appear as the islands of the Greater Antilles."[2] Visitors disembark from their ships or planes, however, see the poverty, the backwardness, the pathetic smallness of human effort which matches so ill with what nature originally provided, and come away with a feeling of disappointment. Not even the little things of Haiti are immediately attractive: the peasants are not "quaint," their costumes are not "picturesque," their towns are not "colorful"; even the souvenirs to take back to the tourist ship have likely as not been made in New York and imported by the local shops. Outsiders, distracted by the human element, hardly glance at the scenery; and since as conducted tourists they are not likely to penetrate far beyond the seacoast, or stay long enough

1. Christopher Columbus, *Select Letters*, R. H. Major, ed. (London, 1870), p. 3.
2. Blair Niles, *Black Haiti*, p. 6.

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175 192 if a blow were given on the face the word "*pimme*" was added to the verb describing that blow, but if a stick had been used, "*bimme*" was added, and if a whip, then "*v'lap v'lap.*"

175 193 One of the Negro contributions which gives a delightful charm to the language is the principle of doubling, whether the word is adjective, adverb, verb, or pronoun. Faine cites the following examples:

ioun bel, bel femme—an extraordinarily beautiful woman.
li té bien, bien malade—he was very gravely ill.
li marcher, l'marcher, l'marcher—he kept on walking and walking.
li-minme, li-minme—it is really he himself.[8]

175 538 Still another and very important Negro contribution is the wealth of proverbs. A person may say practically anything he chooses in proverbs, particularly if he uses to its fullest the significant tones of which his voice is capable. As many as 1,500 of these proverbs have been collected, and there is reason to believe that as many more could be found.[9] In general they say the same things proverbs say in any language:

Fer couper fer. Il faut du fer pour couper le fer; which is to signify, "Great needs demand great remedies."

Tit cochon tit sang. Un petit cochon a peu de sang; that is, "From each according to his means."

Sel pas besoin vanter tête li. Le sel n'a pas besoin de se vanter; or, "Real merit never needs to boast."

Since some of the proverbs make allusions to elephants and tigers, animals not found in the Caribbean region, it is clear that these at least, and maybe others, go far back in the wisdom of the folk.

538 Storytelling is a well-cultivated art in Haiti. The folklore of Créole is rich, some of it bearing close resemblance to the Negro tales current in the southern United States, particularly the Br'er Rabbit tales. When a group gathers and a story is about to begin, the teller says, "Cric?"—as if to say, "Shall I tell you a story?" or, "Are you ready?" To this his listeners reply, "Crac!"—or, "Please do! Certainly!" or, "We are listening." The two words together make a sort of rapport between raconteur and audience, an overture, "Once upon a time."

8. Faine, *op. cit.*, p. 4.
9. J. J. Audain, *Proverbes* (Port-au-Prince, 1877), cites 1,011 Haitian proverbs in Créole, and E. Chenet, *Proverbes créoles* (Port-au-Prince, 1896), records 1,436 proverbs.

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Only a beginning has been made of collecting the thousands of "Cric? Crac!" stories current in Haiti.

It is only recently that people have written Créole, so that there is no standard orthography. Every writer spells words phonetically, with consequent irregularities, and with wide differences between two people writing the same thing. Recent etymological studies may lead eventually to a dictionary and a standard spelling. In order that the reader may see the resemblance of Créole to French, yet its differences from that language, we shall quote a part of one of La Fontaine's fables put into Créole verse by Georges Sylvain.[10] His own French retranslation accompanies the fable, turning such phrases as "female pig" into "sow."

Nan temps toutt bett té palé,
Té g'ain (palant pa respé)
Té g'ain gnou fémel cochon.
Zott connin gen cochon bon?
Cilo-là té fait zanmi
Avec gnou fémel chien, qui
Té prett pou mi bas. Chien-là,
Gnou jou, dit cochon con ça:
"Moin pré pou moin accouché,
"Ma comé, t'en pri! souplé,
"Pémett moin prété gnou coin
"Nan pac ou, pou pititt moin."

Au temps où toutes les bêtes parlaient,
Il y avait (sauf votre respect)
Il y avait une truie.
Vous savez comme les truies sont bonnes gens?
Celle-ci avait fait amitié
Avec une chienne, qui
Était sur le point de mettre bas. La chienne
Un jour, dit à la truie:
"Me voilà près d'accoucher,
"Ma commère, je vous en prie, s'il vous plaît,
"Permettez-moi d'emprunter un coin
"De votre parc, pour mes enfants."[11]

The terseness of the language is fascinating, a situation is hit off precisely in a few words: a stuffed shirt has been deflated, and the truth has been told. A Haitian was heard to say, "Nègue riche li mulatte; mulatte pauvre li nègue"—a rich Negro is accounted a mulatto; a poor mulatto is to all intents and purposes no better than a Negro. And there is a profound comment on the whole caste system.

Wherever the French went in the Caribbean region the Créole language spread—in Louisiana, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Guiana. Each region has its own peculiarities, but in general it may be said that these other regions show much more French (as distinct from Norman) influence on Créole, and much less Spanish and English influence. Similarly in Haitian towns, where the élite speak French

10. *Cric? Crac! Fables de La Fontaine racontées par un montagnard haïtien et transcrites en vers créoles* (Port-au-Prince, 1929), p. 21.
11. "*Zott*" means "*vous autres*"; "*gnou*" is "*une*."